Numb. 197

The TATLER.

By *Iſaac Bickerſtaff* Eſq;

Semper ego Auditor tantum?—— Juv.

From *Tueſday July* 11. to *Thurſday July* 13. 1710.

Grecian Coffee-houſe, July 12.

WHEN I came hither this Evening, the Man of the Houſe delivered me a Book very finely bound. When I received it, I over-heard one of the Boys whiſper another, and ſay, It was a fine Thing to be a great Scholar! What a pretty Book that is! It has indeed a very gay Outſide, and is dedicated to me by a very ingenious Gentleman, who does not put his Name to it. The Title of it (for the Work is in *Latin*) is, *Epiſtolarum Obſcurorum Virorum, ad Dm. M. Ortuinum Gratium, Volumina* II. *&c.* "The Epiſtles of the Obſcure "Writers to *Ortuinus, &c.* The Purpoſe of the Work is ſignified in the Dedication, in very elegant Language, and fine Raillery. It ſeems, this is a Collection of Letters which ſome profound Blockheads, who lived before our Times, have written in Honour of each other, and for their mutual Information in each others Abſurdities. They are moſtly of the *German* Nation, whence from Time to Time Inundations of Writers have flow'd, more pernicious to the Learned World than the Swarms of *Goths* and *Vandals* to the Politick. It is, methinks, wonderful, that Fellows could be awake, and utter ſuch incoherent Conceptions, and converſe with great Gravity like learned Men, without the leaſt Taſt of Knowledge or good Senſe. It would have been an endleſs Labour to have taken any other Method of expoſing ſuch Impertinencies, than by an Edition of their own Works, where you ſee their Follies, according to the Ambition of ſuch Virtuoſi, in a moſt correct Edition.

Looking over theſe accompliſh'd Labours, I could not but reflect upon the immenſe Load of Writings which the Commonalty of Scholars have puſhed into the World, and the Abſurdity of Parents, who educate Crowds to ſpend their Time in Purſuit of ſuch cold and ſpiritleſs Endeavours to appear in Publick. It ſeems therefore a fruitleſs Labour to attempt the Correction of the Taſt of our Contemporaries, except it was in our Power to burn all the ſenſeleſs Labours of our Anceſtors. There is a ſecret Propenſity in Nature from Generation to Generation in the Blockheads of one Age to admire thoſe of another; and Men of the ſame Imperfections are as great Admirers of each other, as thoſe of the ſame Abilities.

This great Miſchief of voluminous Follies proceeds from a Misfortune which happens in all Ages, that Men of barren Genius's, but fertile Imaginations, are bred Scholars. This may at firſt appear a Paradox; but when we conſider the talking Creatures we meet in publick Places, it will no longer be ſuch. *Ralph Shallow* is a young Fellow, that has not by Nature any the leaſt Propenſity to ſtrike into what has not been obſerved and ſaid every Day of his Life by others; but with that Inability of ſpeaking any Thing that is uncommon, he has a great Readineſs at what he can ſpeak of, and his Imagination runs into all the different Views of the Subject he treats of in a Moment. If *Ralph* had Learning added to the common Chit Chat of the Town, he would have been a Diſputant upon all Topicks that ever were conſidered by Men of his own Genius. As for my Part, I never am teazed by an empty Town-Fellow, but I bleſs my Stars that he was not bred a Scholar. This Addition, we muſt conſider, would have made him capable of maintaining his Follies. His being in the Wrong would have been protected by ſuitable Arguments; and when he was hedged in by Logical Terms, and falſe Appearances, you muſt have owned your ſelf convinced before you could then have got rid of him, and the Shame of his Triumph had been added to the Pain of his Impertinence.

There is a Sort of Littleneſs in the Minds of Men of wrong Senſe, which makes them much more inſufferable than meer Fools, and has the further Inconvenience of being attended by an endleſs Loquacity. For which Reaſon, it would be a very proper Work, if ſome Well-wiſher to human Society would conſider the Terms upon which People meet in publick Places, in order to prevent the unſeaſonable Declamations which we meet with there. I remember, in my Youth it was an Humour at the Univerſity, when a Fellow pretended to be more eloquent than ordinary, and had formed to himſelf a Plot to gain all our Admiration, or triumph over us with an Argument, to either of which he had no Manner of Call; I ſay, in either of theſe Caſes, it was the Humour to ſhut one Eye. This whimſical Way of taking

taking Notice to him of his Abſurdity, has prevented many a Man from being a Coxcomb. If amongſt us, on ſuch an Occaſion each Man offered a voluntary Rhetorician ſome Snuff, it would probably produce the ſame Effect. As the Matter now ſtands, whether a Man will or no, he is obliged to be informed in whatever another pleaſes to entertain him with, tho' the Preceptor makes theſe Advances out of Vanity, and not to inſtruct, but inſult him.

There is no Man will allow him who wants Courage to be called a Soldier; but Men who want good Senſe, are very frequently not only allowed to be Scholars, but eſteemed for being ſuch. At the ſame Time it muſt be granted, that as Courage is the natural Parts of a Soldier, ſo is a good Underſtanding of a Scholar. Such little Minds as theſe, whoſe Productions are collected in the Volume to which I have the Honour to be Patron, are the Inſtruments for artful Men to work with, and become popular with the unthinking Part of Mankind. In Courts, they make tranſparent Flatterers; in Camps, oſtentatious Bullies; in Colleges, unintelligible Pedants; and their Faculties are uſed accordingly by thoſe who lead them.

When a Man who wants Judgment is admitted into the Converſation of reaſonable Men, he ſhall remember ſuch improper Circumſtances, and draw ſuch groundleſs Concluſions from their Diſcourſe, and that with ſuch Colour of Senſe, as would divide the beſt Set of Company that can be got together. It is juſt thus with a Fool who has a Familiarity with Books, he ſhall quote and recite one Author againſt another, in ſuch a Manner as ſhall puzzle the beſt Underſtanding to refute it; tho' the moſt ordinary Capacity may obſerve, that it is only Ignorance which makes the Intricacy. All the true Uſe of that we call Learning, is to ennoble and improve our natural Faculties, and not to diſguiſe our Imperfections. It is therefore in vain for Folly to attempt to conceal it ſelf by the Refuge of learned Languages. Literature does but make a Man more eminently the Thing which Nature made him; and *Polyglottes*, had he ſtudied leſs than he has, and writ only in his Mother Tongue, had been known only in *Great Britain* for a Pedant.

Mr. Bickerſtaff *thanks* Dorinda, *and will both anſwer her Letter, and take her Advice.*

Advertiſements.

*** The Firſt Volume of the Lucubrations of Iſaac Bickerſtaff Eſq; in Octavo, on a Fine Royal and Medium Papers, is now to be delivered to Subſcribers, by Charles Lillie, Perfumer, at the Corner of Beaufort-Buildings in the Strand, and J. Morphew near Stationers-Hall.

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THE Proprietors of India Shares are earneſtly deſir'd to meet at Sadlers-Hall in Cheapſide, to Morrow the 14th Inſtant, at Ten a Clock in the Forenoon, to conſider of ſeveral Matters that will be then propoſed for the Benefit of the ſaid Proprietors.

Morning-Gowns for Men and Women, of Silk, Stuffs, and Callicoe's (being the Goods of Perſons that failed) which were to be diſpoſed of at the Olive-Tree and Still, are now to be ſold at the Golden Sugar-Loaf up one Pair of Stairs, over-againſt the Horſe at Charing-Croſs; with a freſh Parcel at very low Rates, the Price being ſet on each Gown.

A Very good Four-wheeled Chaiſe to be ſold at Penniworth, with Harneſs and Bridles for Two Horſes. Enquire at the Norwich Caſtle in Brook's-market near Holborn-Bars.

†‡† La Secchia Rapita, the Trophy-Bucket; A Mock-Heroick Poem: The firſt of the Kind. By Signior Aleſſandro Jaſſoni, upon an Accident that happened between the two Parties of the Guelphs and the Gibellins in Italy, in their Contention about who ſhould be uppermoſt, the Emperor or the Pope. Done from the Italian into Engliſh Rhime. By Mr. Ozell. To which is annexed, A correct Copy of Jaſſoni's Original; together with Signior Salviani's Notes from the Venetian Edition, with Hiſtorical Cuts. Part I. Printed for E. Sanger at the Middle-Temple-gate in Fleet-ſtreet. Price 1 s. 6 d.

*** New Muſick juſt publiſhed: The Monthly Mask of Vocal Muſick, or the neweſt Songs made for the Theatres and other Occaſions, for June. Pr. 6 d. Likewiſe a new Set of Tunes for Violins and Hautboys, performed in the Comedy call'd, The Alchymiſt. Compos'd by an Italian Author. Note, there is lately printed ſeveral new Pieces of Muſick for Violins, Flutes, and Hautboys. Alſo all the neweſt Country-Dances and French Dances. All engraven. Printed for J. Walſh, Servant in Ordinary to Her Majeſty, and P. Randal, at the Harp and Hautboy in Catherine-ſtreet, near Somerſet-Houſe in the Strand, and J. Hare at the Viol and Flute in Cornhil near the Royal-Exchange.

NOtice is hereby given, That Mrs. Ogle's Catalogue of Goods that ſhould have been drawn this preſent Thurſday, will not be drawn till the 27th Inſtant at the Market-houſe in Bloomſbury. There being ſome Tickets ſtill leſt, all Perſons are deſired to take them at Mrs. Ogle's in Queen-ſtreet, againſt Mountague-houſe, where the Goods may be ſeen: Or Tickets may be had at Mr. Sedgwick's, Hair-cutter, in the Strand.

NOtice is hereby given, That the Sale of Lace at the Lace-Chamber on Ludgate-Hill, will be drawn on Wedneſday the Second of Auguſt next, at Stationers-Hall near Ludgate. There are ſtill ſome Tickets to be diſpoſed of.

THIS is to give Notice, That the Sale of Goods that are to be ſeen at Mrs. Butler's at the Indian Man in Ruſſel-ſtreet near Bow-ſtreet in Covent-Garden, is to be drawn on Thurſday the 20th Inſtant, there being but few Tickets left.

THIS is to give Notice, That Mrs. Smith's 1 s. Sale of Plate and Goods, that is in Red Lion-ſtreet in Holborn, next Door but one to the Nag's-Head is to be drawn the 26th Inſtant, and the Firſt and Laſt drawn ſhall have a large Silver Spoon if they be a Blank.

THE Sale of Goods, at the Comb-ſhop in Cannon-ſtreet, will be drawn at Weavers-hall in Baſinghall-ſtreet the 28th Inſtant, if full, if not, the 10th of Auguſt. Tickets to be had at the Place aboveſaid, at the Boar's-Head and blue Anchor in Cheap-ſide, at Mrs. Marſhal's, a Stuff Shop, next Door to the Vine-Tavern in Long-Acre, and at Bedford's-Coffee-houſe in Bedford-court in Bedford-ſtreet, Covent-Garden, at 1 s. per Ticket.

THE Royal Beautifier; or the greateſt Coſmetick in the World: Being the moſt incomparable Thing in Nature for the preſerving and reſtoring a good Complexion: It even to a Miracle fortifies the Skin againſt Wind and Sun, and makes ſuch as are pale and wan, look freſh and lively, and have a charming Countenance. It certainly takes away Freckles, Spots, Pimples, Scurf, Morphew, and Sun-burning; and miraculouſly makes the Complexion plump, freſh, ſmooth, and delicately fair, even to Admiration. It having met with great Applauſe amongſt Perſons of Quality and others; ſo that Perſons daily reſort from all Parts of the Town to fetch it. To prevent Counterfeits, it is only ſold at Lemery's Head at Charing-Croſs, at 2 s. 6 d. per Pot, with Directions at large.

PErfect Cure for the Aſthma by an Elixir, (a pleaſant and innocent Medicine) to be taken in Drops, which has done Wonders in that Caſe; but the Author's ſaying ſo being not ſo convincing as trying it will be, he deſires you would for your own Sakes, when it it does no Good, can do no Harm to the Body, nor much to the Purſe in laying out 3 s. 6 d. which is the Price of a Bottle. To be had only at Mr. Lawrence's, a Toy-ſhop at the Griffin the Corner of Bucklersbury, Poultry.